



Attorney General Jon Bruning

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **AstraZeneca Pays \$3.2 Million to Nebraska to Settle Claims of Off-Label Drug Marketing**

Lincoln, NE - Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today the State of Nebraska has reached a settlement with pharmaceutical manufacturer AstraZeneca LP. The settlement stems from allegations that the company engaged in an off-label marketing campaign that improperly promoted the antipsychotic drug, Seroquel. AstraZeneca will pay the Nebraska Medicaid program more than \$3 million.

“AstraZeneca’s improper marketing endangered kids,” said Attorney Bruning. “This settlement reimburses our Medicaid program for its loss and works to ensure the rules are followed in the future.”

The agreement is part of a larger settlement between AstraZeneca and states and federal governments, which totals \$520 million. The settlement compensates Medicaid and various federal healthcare programs for harm suffered as a result of the company’s conduct.

Seroquel is an atypical antipsychotic drug used to treat certain psychological disorders. From January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2006, AstraZeneca promoted the sale and use of the drug for certain uses that the Food and Drug Administration had not approved. AstraZeneca allegedly promoted Seroquel to psychiatrists, primary care physicians and other health care professionals for unapproved uses to treat aggression, Alzheimer’s disorder, anger management, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dementia and sleeplessness.

AstraZeneca also allegedly made illegal payments to physicians, including paid trips to resort locations to “advise” AstraZeneca about marketing messages for unapproved uses, to serve as authors of articles written by AstraZeneca agents, and to conduct studies for unapproved uses of Seroquel.

The settlement resolves claims that AstraZeneca’s conduct induced physicians to prescribe Seroquel for children, adolescents and dementia patients in long-term care facilities.

As part of the settlement, AstraZeneca has entered into a Corporate Integrity Agreement with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General, which will closely monitor the company’s future marketing and sales practices.

Bruning’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, working with other state MFCU’s and the federal government, participated in the investigation.